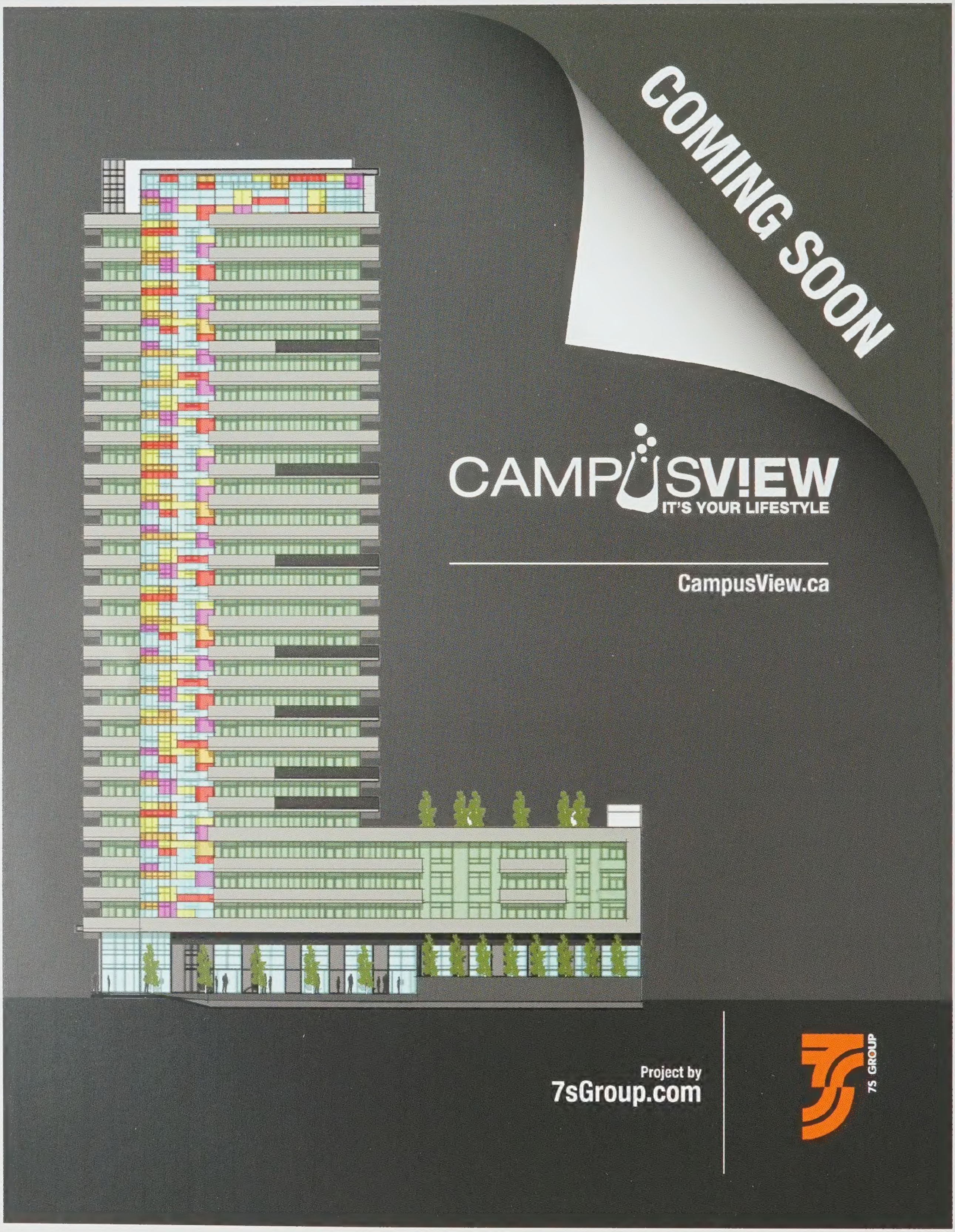
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Canadian Tamil Congress
கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை
Congrès Tamoul Canadien
"Voice of Tamil Canadians"

Annual Dinner 2011


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Congrès Tamoul Canadien
"Voice of Tamil Canadians"

Annual Dinner 2011

Le Parc Conference & Banquet Centre
Saturday, January 22, 2011 5:30 p.m.

Canadian Tamil Congress
கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை
Congrès Tamoul Canadien

"Voice of Tamil Canadians"

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- **Winnipeg**
- **Halifax**
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Published By: Canadian Tamil Congress
Layout and Print: Printfast.ca.

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Table of Contents

Canadian National Anthem

O Canada!
Our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.

With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!

From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.

God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee

தமிழ்த் தாய் வாழ்த்து

வாழ்க நிரந்தரம் வாழ்க தமிழ்மொழி
வாழிய வாழியவே
வான மளந்தனைத்தும் அளந்திடும்
வண் மொழி வாழியவே
ஏழ் கடல் வைப்பினுந் தன் மணம் வீசி
இசை கொண்டு வாழியவே
எங்கள் தமிழ் மொழி எங்கள் தமிழ் மொழி
என்றென்றும் வாழியவே
சூழ்கலி நீங்கத் தமிழ் மொழி ஓங்கத்
துலங்குக வையகமே
தொல்லை வினைதரு தொல்லை யகன்று
சுடர்க தமிழ் நாடே
வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழி வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழி
வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழியே
வானம் அறிந்தனைத்தும் அறிந்து
வளர் மொழி வாழியவே

Canadian Tamil Congress
கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை
Congrès Tamoul Canadien
"Voice of Tamil Canadians"

Mission and Objectives

The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) is a non-profit organization which serves as the voice of Tamil Canadians. Headquartered in Toronto, the CTC has 11 chapters across the country and an elected board of directors. The non-partisan organization works as the community's spokesperson on the municipal, provincial, federal and international levels. Its chapters can be found in Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, London, Edmonton, Vancouver, Waterloo, Winnipeg, Windsor and Regina.

- Uphold Canadian values of human rights, multiculturalism, religious and cultural diversity, gender equality, pluralism and volunteerism
- Promote the participation of Tamil Canadians in activities of local, regional, provincial and national importance
- Work with various levels of governments in Canada to highlight and resolve issues impacting Tamil Canadians
- Cooperate with Canadian and international organizations in alleviating the suffering of Tamils and provide humanitarian assistance to Tamils worldwide
- Champion for equality, equality rights and equal opportunity for all diverse groups, in particular gender equality, by working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination and intolerance
- Recognize and support the social, cultural and political aspirations of the Tamils in the island of Tamil Eelam and worldwide. Advance the research, study and usage of the Tamil language and culture
- Develop and enhance working relationships with other cultural groups in Canada

Mission et Objectifs

Le congrès Tamoul canadien (CTC), est un organisme à but non lucratif qui représente la voix des Tamouls canadiens. Le siège social étant à Toronto, le CTC possède 11 chapitres dans l'ensemble du pays ainsi qu'un conseil administratif élu. L'organisme agit comme un porte- parole non-partisan de la communauté au niveau municipal, provincial, fédéral et international. Ces chapitres sont situés à Ottawa, Montréal, Halifax, Londres, Edmonton, Vancouver, Waterloo, Winnipeg, Guelph et Régina.

- Confirmez les valeurs canadiennes des droits de l'homme, multiculturalisme, diversité religieuse et culturelle, égalité entre les sexes, pluralisme et volontarisme
- Favorisez la participation des canadiens tamoul dans les activités d'importance locale, régionale, provinciale et nationale. Travaillez avec de divers niveaux des gouvernements au Canada pour accentuer et résoudre des problèmes effectuant les canadiens tamoul
- Coopérez avec des organismes canadiens et internationaux à alléger la douleur et fournissez l'assistance humanitaire aux tamoul dans le monde entier
- Champion pour l'égalité, les droits d'égalité et l'égalité des chances pour tous les groupes divers, en particulier égalité entre les sexes, en travaillant vers l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination et d'intolérance
- Identifiez et soutenez les aspirations sociales, culturelles et politiques des Tamoul sur île du Tamoul Eeelam et dans le monde entier
- Avancez la recherche, l'étude et l'utilisation de la langue et de la culture tamoul
- Développez et augmentez les relations de travail avec d'autres groupes ethnoculturels au Canada

Canadian Tamil Congress
கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை
Congrès Tamoul Canadien
"Voice of Tamil Canadians"

நோக்கம் மற்றும் குறிக்கோள்கள்

கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை ஒரு இலாப நோக்கமற்ற, கனடியத் தமிழரின் குரலாய் விளங்கும் அமைப்பாகும். ரொறன்ரோவிலே தலைமைப் பணிமனையைக் கொண்ட பேரவை நாடு முழுவதும் 11 கிளைகளோடு ஒரு தேசிய அமைப்பாக விளங்குவதோடு உறுப்பினரால் தெரிவு செய்யப்பட்ட இயக்குனர் சபையையும் கொண்டதாகும்.

பக்கசார்பற்றுச் செயற்படும் கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை கனடியக் குமுகச் செயற் பாடுகளில் தமிழர்களின் பங்கேற்றலை ஊக்குவித்தல், தமிழர்களின் முக்கிய பிரச்சினைகளை முதன்மைப்படுத்துதல் மற்றும் கனடிய விழுமியங்களைப் பேணுவதுடன் வேற்றின குமுகங்களும் அரசாங்கங்களும் ஏனைய அமைப்புக்களும் தமிழர்களின் குமுக, கலாச்சார மற்றும் அரசியல் பிரச்சினைகளைப் பேசச்செய்தல் போன்றவற்றை முக்கிய நோக்கமாகக் கொண்டதாகும். பேரவையின் குறிக்கோள்கள் சில கீழ்வருமாறு:

- உள்ளூர், கோட்டம், மாநிலம், நாட்டு முதன்மை வாய்ந்த செயற்பாடுகளில் கனடாத் தமிழரது பங்கேற்றலை ஊக்குவித்தல்
- கனடாத் தமிழர் தொடர்பான சிக்கல்களை முன்னிலைப்படுத்தித் தீர்வு காண்பதற்குப் பல்வேறு மட்டக் கனடா அரசுகளோடு இணைந்து செயற்படல்
- தமிழீழம் மற்றும் உலகெங்கும் வாழும் தமிழரது குமுக, பண்பாட்டு, அரசியல் வேட்கைகளை ஏற்றுப் போற்றுதல்
- மனித உரிமை, பல்பண்பாடு, சமய-பண்பாட்டுப் பல்வண்மை, பால் ஒப்புமை, பன்மைநெறி, தொண்டுநெறி ஆகிய கனடாவின் விழுமியங்களை மேம்படுத்தல்
- தமிழ் மொழி மற்றும் பண்பாடு பற்றிய ஆய்வு, கல்வி, பயன்பாடு என்பவற்றை மேம்படுத்தல்
- கனடாவின் பிற இனப்பண்பாட்டுக் குழுமங்களோடு உறவு பூணுதலும் வளர்த்தலும்
- கனடா மற்றும் பன்னாட்டு அமைப்புகளோடு இணைந்து, உலகளாவிய தமிழ் மக்களின் இன்னல் போக்கலும் மாந்த நேய உதவி வழங்கலும்
- அனைத்து வேறுபாடுகளையும், பொறுதியின்மையையும் ஒழிப்பதற்குப் பாடுபடுதல். அனைத்துக் குழுமங்களுக்கும் ஒப்பான உரிமை மற்றும் வாய்ப்பு நாடிப் பாடுபடல். சிறப்பாக பால் ஒப்புமை நாடிப் போராடல்.

Canadian Tamil Congress
கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை
Congrès Tamoul Canadien
"Voice of Tamil Canadians"

Message from President



On behalf of the Canadian Tamil Congress, I am pleased to wish you all a Happy Thai Pongal and welcome you to our Annual Dinner. Thai Pongal signifies the beginning of the Tamil New Year which is observed by over 80 million Tamils around the world. Tamil Canadians, from coast to coast, irrespective of their faith, celebrate Thai Pongal with great enthusiasm.

As we welcome Thai Pongal, we should take stock of our accomplishments during the past year and build upon our success. The CTC continued to facilitate the integration of Tamil Canadians into the wider community by promoting active participation in civic elections and by partnering with other organizations in events of interest to all. The CTC successfully partnered with other groups including Canadian Council for Refugees and Amnesty International and advocated against Bill C49. A large part of the year was defined by the struggles faced by our relatives and friends on the island of Sri Lanka as an authoritarian leadership continued to commit crimes against humanity by incarcerating over 380,000 civilians, including over 60,000 children, behind barbed-wire camps just because they were Tamils. The CTC partnered with sister organizations around the world to bring these atrocities to the attention of the UN as well as other Human Rights organizations. The CTC organized the 2009 May Massacre Remembrance inside our Parliament in Ottawa to remember the victims.

In the home front, the CTC partnered with the Canadian Cancer Society in organizing a walk-a-thon that helped raise $36,000. Thanks to the dedication of our community members and volunteers, CTC rallied the community to continue to donate blood this year. The Canadian Blood Services (CBS) honoured the CTC as the top Community Partner for Central Ontario at the national event "Honouring Our Lifeblood" in Ottawa on September 20, 2010. The Canadian Tamil Congress, the coordinating body for Tamil Canadian blood donors, accepted the award in recognition of Tamil Canadians' outstanding contributions to Canada's blood system. Only one community partner from each of the seven regions in Canada was honoured at the event. In particular, the CTC was singled out for becoming the largest community blood donation group across Canada.

This Thai Pongal also brings us new optimism because the people of South Sudan finally had a chance to express their will and shape their own destiny. We are optimistic that Eelam Tamils who share similar fate will get their chance to decide their future as well. In all of our struggles, one thing remains clear; our cause for equality, justice, fairness and the upholding of human rights for all is a just one.

Wishing you all a Very Happy Thai Pongal.
உங்கள் எல்லோருக்கும் இனிய தைப்பொங்கல் வாழ்த்துக்கள்.

Professor (Ranjan) R. Sri Ranjan, Ph.D., P.Eng.
President, Canadian Tamil Congress

Thai Pongal
The Thanksgiving Festival of Tamils



Thai Pongal is a harvest festival equivalent to the Thanksgiving day and it is celebrated by Tamils across the world. Considered to be one of the oldest harvest festivals, Pongal is said to have originated in the pre-Christian era in Tamil Nadu. In the Tamil language Pongal literally means "boiling over or spill over." The boiling of milk in a clay pot until it spills over is symbolic of the heart's desire for abundance and prosperity.

The Pongal festival falls on the first day of the month of *Thai* of the Tamil calendar (i.e. 14th of January according to the Gregorian calendar) and is enveloped by a sense of newness. Celebrated traditionally at harvest time, it is a festival signifying the wealth of food and prosperity associated with the wish for a bountiful harvest. By thanking the rain, sun and the farm animals that contribute to the production of rice, the most staple food of the Tamils this festival expresses the harmony and inter-dependence between all created realities that make this planet a great place to live and grow.

Pongal is celebrated by the Indian state of Tamil Nadu as well as Tamils worldwide, including those in Sri Lanka, Tamil Eelam, , Malaysia, Mauritius, South Africa, USA, Canada and Singapore. Transcending religious differences Pongal is celebrated by Tamils of all religious persuasions.

A flat square pitch is made and decorated with *kolam* drawings, and it is exposed to the direct sun light. A hearth made of natural fire wood is set up using three bricks. The cooking begins by placing a clay pot with water on the hearth. A senior member of the family will begin the cooking and the rest of the family dutifully assists him or her. The moment of climax is the spill over of the Pongal during cooking. The spillover of milk is a propitious symbol of abundance and good omen and shouts of " Pongalo Pongal" will accompany. Thereafter, a member of the family ceremoniously puts three handful of new rice inside the boiling pot.

The other ingredients of this special dish are chakkarai (brown cane sugar) or katkandu (sugar candy), milk (cow's milk or coconut milk), roasted green gram (payaru), raisins, and cashew nuts. When the meal is ready it is first served on a banana leaf and the family prays for a few minutes to thank nature, sun and farmers. Then the meal (Pongal) is served with fruits (banana and mango) among the family. Later it will be shared with neighbours, friends and relatives.

The richness of Thamil culture and historical traditions is symbolized in the Thamil New Year and Thai Pongal festival. By celebrating this festival the Thamils in Diaspora help to perpetuate our rich culture, traditions, literary opulence, sublime philosophy and socio-economic aspirations. It also gives an emotional link to our kith and kin at home or scattered across the globe.

Ontario

Premier of Ontario - Premier ministre de l'Ontario

January 22, 2011



A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to everyone attending the fourth Annual Gala Dinner and Tamil Harvest Festival, hosted by the Canadian Tamil Congress.

Ontarians are privileged to be able to draw on the cultural diversity that enriches and strengthens the province we are proud to call home. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Tamil community for its contributions to Ontario, and Canada.

Tamil Thai Pongal celebrates the prosperity that a bountiful harvest brings and marks a time of renewal and fresh beginnings. It is also a time to reflect upon the many blessings we are so fortunate to enjoy in Ontario.

Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable and inspiring evening.

Dalton McGuinty
Premier

Thai Pongal in Canada and Around the World

Newcomers often bring many traditions as they immigrate to new lands. For the Tamil Canadian community, Thai Pongal is one such tradition. Falling on January 14, Thai Pongal is typically marked in Tamil Canadian households across Canada. Equivalent to Thanksgiving, Thai Pongal is also celebrated across generations, from Tamils who immigrated to their children and grandchildren born in Canada.

Basics of Thai Pongal

Q. Where is Thai Pongal celebrated?

A. Thai Pongal is celebrated worldwide by Tamils, including those in Tamil Nadu, Malaysia, Mauritius, Tamil Eelam, South Africa, USA, Canada, Sri Lanka and Singapore.

Q. When is Thai Pongal observed?

A. In the Tamil calendar, the year's first day falls on January 14 and that is when the Thai Pongal is typically celebrated. The timing also coincides with harvest season in South Asia.

Q. Why do Tamils mark Thai Pongal?

A. The carrying on of tradition and custom are part of the reasons that Thai Pongal is celebrated in Canada. By thanking nature (the sun, rain, etc), this ancient festival expresses the harmony and inter-dependence between the environment and humans. As it falls at the start of the Tamil calendar year, a spirit of newness, hope and optimism infuses the celebrations. It is a time for renewal and new beginnings.

Q. What are the main rituals associated with Thai Pongal?



A. The boiling of milk in a pot is a common ritual associated with Thai Pongal. Actually, pongal literally means "boiling over or spill over." The boiling over of milk in a pot is seen as a good omen and a favorable symbol bringing abundance. After the milk boils over, people say "Pongalo Pongal" to bring good fortune and three handfuls of rice are then placed in the boiling pot. Some families in Canada also decorate the entrances to their homes with "Kolams".

Q. What ingredients mainly go into pongal?

A. Pongal is also a dish made on special occasions, such as Thai Pongal. Pongal is made from rice, brown cane sugar, sugar candy, milk, green gram, raisins and cashew nuts.

A Message from the Mayor

I am pleased to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone attending the Tamil "Thai Pongal" Festival and annual gala dinner hosted by the Canadian Tamil Congress.

An ancient harvest festival, Thai Pongal is a thanksgiving ceremony to honour nature for a bountiful harvest and is an occasion that brings devotees, family and friends together in celebration of this very significant event that marks new beginnings.

The freedom to observe one's customs and practices is a valued and treasured right of every individual and the Tamil community must be proud of their efforts and commitment to preserve their rich heritage and traditions.

Toronto is a city renowned for the harmony and respect in which its people co-exist and it is this unity that allows us to recognize and celebrate the differences among us.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for a memorable and enjoyable Thai Pongal Festival.

Yours truly,

Mayor Rob Ford
City of Toronto

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CITY OF MISSISSAUGA
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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



January 22, 2011

Dear Friends:

On behalf of members of Council and the residents of the City of Mississauga, I am pleased to extend greetings to the Canadian Tamil Congress on the occasion of the "Thai Pongal" Festival and Annual Gala Dinner.

"Thai Pongal" is an important holiday in the Tamil community. This annual harvest festival is a time for hope and optimism in new beginnings. This event will showcase the cultural richness and the many contributions, achievements and artistic talents of the Tamil Canadian community. It pleases me to see friends and families come together to celebrate holidays of significance.

Once again, on behalf of my colleagues on Council and the residents of the City of Mississauga, best wishes for a memorable event.

Sincerely,

HAZEL McCALLION, C.M., LL.D.
MAYOR

MISSISSAUGA
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THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF MISSISSAUGA
300 CITY CENTRE DRIVE, MISSISSAUGA, ON L5B 3C1
TEL: 905-896-5555 FAX: 905-896-5879
mayor@mississauga.ca



MARKHAM

Frank Scarpitti
Mayor



January 22, 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Members of Council and the Town of Markham, I am pleased to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all those attending the 4th Annual Tamil Thai Pongal Festival Gala Dinner hosted by the Canadian Tamil Congress.

Our community is immeasurably enriched by the diversity of its people and by the special gifts of heritage and culture we each carry within. Thai Pongal, or Harvest Festival is recognized as the most important festivals in the Tamil calendar year and is celebrated around the world. This special gala is the perfect opportunity to showcase the contributions, achievements and artistic talents of the Tamil community.

This special event is a wonderful way in which to celebrate our wealth of diversity. It will help build positive relations among all Canadians, thereby creating a better understanding and acceptance of our diverse cultural groups. Only when we learn to enjoy and appreciate each other for who we are, will we achieve true harmony. When we strive together, we create a better future for us all.

As Mayor, I am proud of your efforts and I am delighted to extend my best wishes for a successful and memorable Gala.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Scarpitti
Mayor

The Corporation of the Town of Markham, Anthony Roman Centre, 101 Town Centre Boulevard, Markham, Ontario L3R 9W3
Tel: 905.475.4872 • Fax. 905.479.7775 • fscarpitti@markham.ca • www.markham.ca

City of PICKERING

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



January 22, 2011

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the City of Pickering and its Members of Council, I am pleased to send greetings to the organizers and guests of the 2011 Tamil Thai Pongal Festival Gala.

While I am unable to attend this year's event, Acting Mayor Doug Dickerson will be there to participate in the celebration and experience the dynamic, diverse and beautiful Tamil culture through a wonderful array of artistic expressions. I commend Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) for organizing this very special event, which will enrich our arts and cultural landscape.

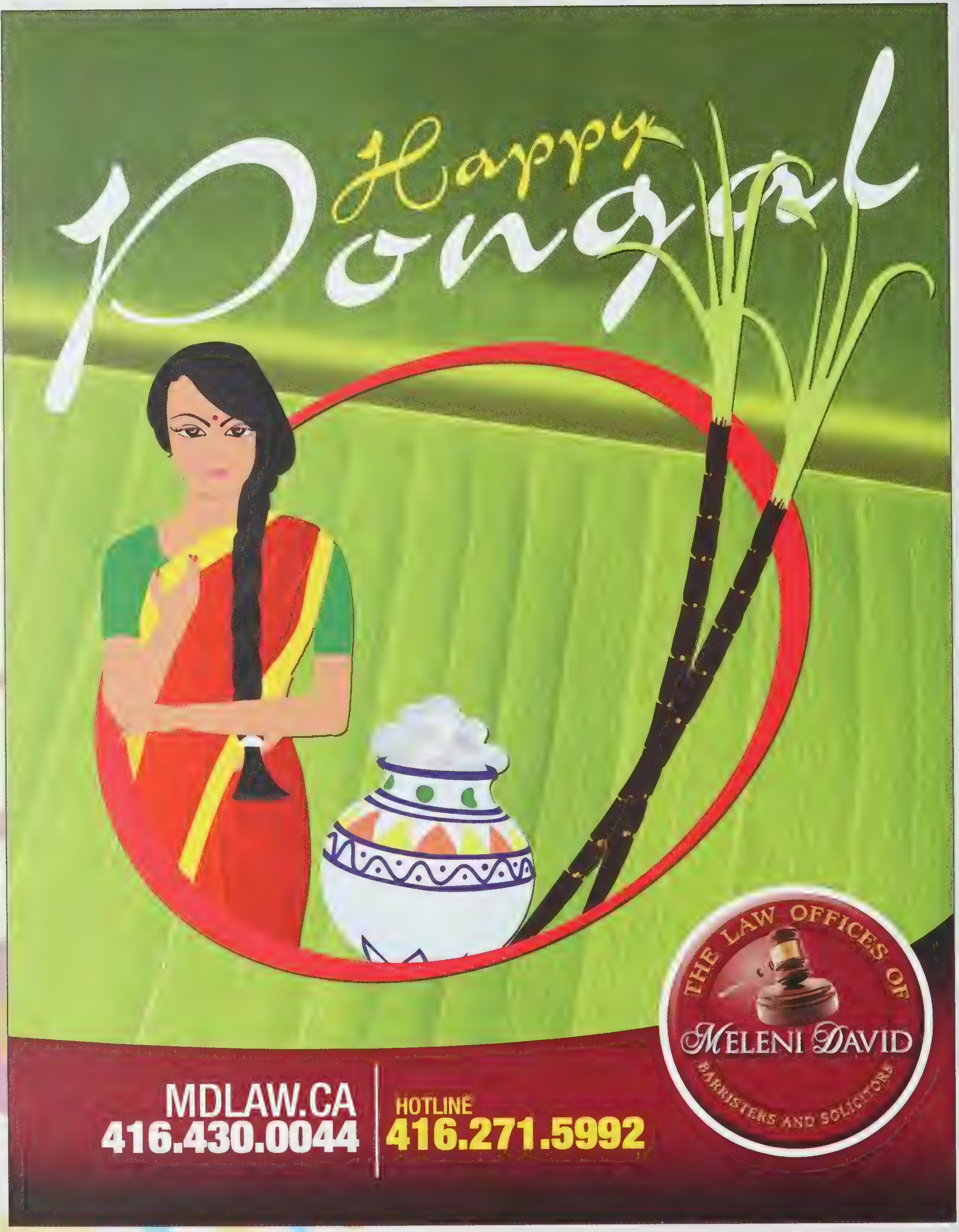
As one of the most diverse municipalities in Canada, the City of Pickering embodies the true spirit of multiculturalism. We are a vibrant mosaic composed of many different cultures and are fortunate to have such a strong Tamil-Canadian community contributing to the success of our City.

Once again, on behalf my colleagues on Council, best wishes for a successful and memorable event.

Yours truly

David Ryan
Mayor, City of Pickering

The Corporation of the City of Pickering
One The Esplanade, Pickering, Ontario, L1V 6K7
Tel 905.420.4600 1.866.683.2760
cityofpickering.com


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Pongal
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VAUGHAN

Office of the Mayor



Thank You for Supporting the 4th Annual Thai Pongal Dinner

January 22nd, 2011

On behalf of the City of Vaughan and Members of Council, I am very pleased to extend greetings to the Canadian Tamil Congress on the occasion of their 4th annual Thai Pongal Dinner.

Tonight's event provides a wonderful opportunity to come together and celebrate the traditional Tamil Harvest Festival that coincides with the start of the New Year. It also offers a chance to honour the success of the Tamil community in Vaughan and recognize the positive contributions they have made to our community and our country.

We are a multicultural city and are honoured that many Tamil Canadians proudly call Vaughan their home. We are enriched by our diversity and take pride in sharing in the celebrations of many different cultures.

Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable event.

Yours sincerely,

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua, P.C
Mayor

JACK LAYTON, MP, DÉPUTÉ
TORONTO – DANFORTH
LEADER, NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY
CHEF, NOUVEAU PARTI DÉMOCRATIQUE



January 22, 2011

Vanakkam!

It is with sincere regrets that I cannot join you this evening as the community recognizes the contributions, achievements and artistic talents of Tamil Canadians. And as you also celebrate Thai Pongal, I extend my best wishes to you and your family.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party, and all Canadians, I thank the community for their contribution and involvement in the multicultural fabric of our country.

I have always been amazed at the tenacity and commitment of the community in making Canada a better country. Tamils have seen devastation and horror in Sri Lanka and despite that, they have made great strides to lead constructive, productive and successful lives in Canada.

However, during this festive time, we must also take a moment and remember the victims of the recent flooding in Sri Lanka. With the tragic loss of lives, the further displacement of people and destruction of homes, I urge the Canadian government to be more generous in pledging aid and support, and do more to provide shelter, clean water and immediate medical attention.

I have always taken immense pride in standing with the community – both during times of crisis and sadness and during times of celebration and happiness. Whether its standing up for justice and peace in Sri Lanka or bringing your voices to Ottawa, as your friends in the New Democratic Party, we will continue to work with you in solidarity and support.

Finally, I want to give special thanks to the Canadian Tamil Congress for their steady leadership and voice on key issues. I appreciate the hard work they do to educate parliamentarians and Canadians on the situation in Sri Lanka and the issues they face here. Keep up the good work!

Again, all the best during the celebration.

Sincerely,

The Hon. Jack Layton, M.P. P.C
Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada

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House of Commons/
Chambre des communes
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel./tél. (613) 995-7224
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Ontario

Andrea Horwath, MPP/députée
Leader/chef
Ontario's NDP/NPD de l'Ontario

January 22, 2011

On behalf of Ontario's New Democrats it gives me great pleasure to extend warmest greetings and best wishes to the Canadian Tamil Congress on the occasion of your Fourth Annual Thai Pongal Festival Gala Dinner.

Pongal is a much-anticipated occasion marking joy and cheer and brings along the best for the festival of the harvest season. May this festival bring you a lifetime of good luck, prosperity and joy.

As Leader of Ontario's NDP, I am proud of the diversity, skills, events and organization that Tamil community members bring to the Province of Ontario. There is a wealth of talent to behold, a pageant befitting of the community's spirit, hard work, accomplishments and contributions.

To everyone in attendance at this special gala, I wish all good things for you as the festival of Pongal gets underway. May this year bring a bounty of all good things to you, your families and to everyone involved in the CTC.

To all the volunteers who gave their time and attention to every last detail, congratulations and thank you! Volunteers are the backbone of a great organization like the Canadian Tamil Congress.

Sincerely,

Andrea Horwath
Leader, Ontario's NDP

Room 113, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, ON M7A 1A5 T – (416) 325-8300 F – (416) 325 8222 E – ndpmail@ndp.on.ca

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Canadian Cancer Society Société canadienne du cancer

Toronto Revenue Development
5 St. Clair Avenu
Sui
Toronto, (
M

January 2011

On behalf of the volunteers and staff of the Canadian Cancer Society, I would like to thank the Canadian Tamil Congress, as well as all of the participants of the **2010 Walk to Save the Ones We Love** benefitting the Canadian Cancer Society.

As a national charitable organization, the Canadian Cancer Society depends on the support of organizations such as the Canadian Tamil Congress to allow us to continue our efforts in leading-edge cancer research, prevention, health promotion, advocacy and support services. In 2008 - 2009, the Society continued to make significant progress in the fight against cancer by funding $49.5 million for internationally recognized cancer research across the country, including just over $16 million in the Toronto Region.

On a local level, the Canadian Cancer Society and its dedicated volunteers are continuing to provide invaluable support to Torontonians. Here are just a few ways the Society helped support people this year:

- **Transportation Program:** Canadian Cancer Society volunteers provided more than 10,900 rides to approximately 2,030 local clients to their cancer-related appointments by 116 local volunteer drivers; and provided transportation assistance to 56 local people and/or families with a child being treated for cancer in Toronto.
- **Peer Support:** 64 local Peer Support volunteers provided information and encouragement to 328 people who wanted to talk to someone who knows from personal experience what it's like to live with cancer.
- **Regional Cancer Centre and Lodge Support:** 105 local volunteers provided over 11,000 hours of practical help and support to people receiving treatment at the local Regional Cancer Programs. 65 local volunteers provided almost 3,500 hours of support to out-of -town guests staying at the lodge while attending local hospitals for their cancer treatment.

Once again, thank you to the Tamil community for joining us in the fight against cancer!!

Sincerely,

Martin Kabat
CEO
Canadian Cancer Society – Ontario Division

For information about cancer, our services or to make a donation / Pour obtenir de l'information sur le cancer, nos services ou pour faire un don
1 888 939-3333 www.cancer.ca
Charitable Organization No. 11882 9803 RR0006

Menu

Soup

Roasted Red Pepper Soup
A rich, simmered blend of tomatoes and
Red peppers roasted in our kitchen, puréed with cream and butter

Salad

Mixed Green Salad with olive oil & balsamic dressing

Choice of Entrées

Served with Masala Pulao, Parisian Potato & Medley of steam vegetables

Jerk Chicken
Traditional Jamaican style jerk chicken oven roasted and served with jerk sauce

Pan Seared Atlantic salmon

8oz Top sirloin

Navarathina Khorma
Mix vegetable in a rich cashew curry

Dessert

Tartuffe
Creamy chocolate & vanilla Tartuffe garnished with fresh strawberry

Coffee, tea & espresso

Programme

1. O'Canada
Ms. Melanie Ratnam

2. Thamil Thai Vazhthu
Ms. Umananthini Rajendram

3. Silent Tribute

4. Lamp Lighting Ceremony

5. Welcome Dance
Students of Guru Nirothini Pararajasingam

6. Canadian Tamil Congress Presentation
Ms. Vani Selvarajah

7. President's Address
Professor R. Sri Ranjan

8. Greetings

Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Town of Markham

Hon. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Member of Provincial Parliament for St. Paul's

Mr. Mike Schreiner
Leader of the Green Party of Ontario

9. Vocal Performance
Ms. Magisha Baheerathan
Winner of TVi Superstar Junior - 2010

10. Chief Guest's Address
Hon. Michael Ignatieff
Leader of Liberal Party of Canada & Member of Parliament for Etobicoke-Lakeshore

11. Dinner

12. Dance
Students of Guru Nirothini Pararajasingam

13. Presentation of Awards

Leaders for Change Award Recipient
Mr. Armand LaBarge, Former York Regional Police Chief

Friend of the Community Award Recipient
Ms. Barbara Jackman, Lawyer

14. Presentation of Cheque
To Canadian Cancer Society

15. Acceptance Speech
Mr. Guy Laporte
Director of Toronto Revenue Development
Canadian Cancer Society

16. Presentation of Cheque
To Annual Tamil Studies Conference
University of Toronto

17. Acceptance Speech
Prof. Francis Cody, University of Toronto

18. Presentation of Cheque
To Kalaikal Creative Arts

19. Acceptance Speech
Mr. Mayurathan Kanagasundaram
Director of Marketing - Kalaikal Creative Arts

20. Vote of Thanks
Ms. Sumudini Sathi , CTC Board of Directors

Master of Ceremonies
Mr. Sarujan Kanapathipillai

CTC: 2010 in Rewind

Tamil Canadian Community Celebrates Thai Pongal

January 16th, 2010 – *Hilton Suites, Markham*



The CTC welcomed a packed house of 1,000 community members and political leaders for its Third Annual Thai Pongal Dinner. The event brought together leaders and political representatives from the federal, provincial and municipal levels to celebrate Tamil Canadian culture and achievements within the Canadian mosaic. Speakers included NDP Leader Jack Layton, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Ontario Citizen and Immigration Minister Michael Chan, Pickering Mayor David Ryan and Markham-Oakridges MP Paul Calandra. Additionally, Don Valley West MP Rob Oliphant brought greetings on behalf of Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff and Toronto Councillor Shelley Carroll brought greetings on behalf of Toronto Mayor David Miller.



CTC also presented cheques in support of SickKids, CanTYD and the Annual Tamil Studies Conference.

Tamil Canadians Participate in Worldwide Vigil For Tamil Refugees On Boat In Merak, Indonesia

January 18th, 2010 – *Australian Consulate, Toronto*

Tamil Canadians rallied outside the Australian Consulate in Toronto as part of an international day of action to highlight the issue of 254 refugees who spent 100 days on a boat off the coast of Merak, Indonesia asking for asylum. Protests and vigils were also held in Sydney, Newcastle (NSW), Melbourne, Auckland, London, and Malaysia. Protesters held signs urging Australia to show compassion and save the lives of the Tamil refugees. The case of the Tamils at Merak made countless headlines all over the world.

CTC Supports Tamil Artistic Community

January 23rd, 2010 – *Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, British Columbia*

With the help of CTC-Vancouver, Shanaathanan Thamotharampillai, a Tamil artist from Sri Lanka, presented a project at the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, an exhibition that ran for approximately eight months.

Entitled *Imag(in)ing 'Home'*, the project unpacked the complexities of the Tamil community by weaving together 300 individual stories about the idea of "home." Each personal story and memory was represented by a mundane or everyday object resulting in a collage of diverse, contested identities, and the memories and histories of a lost homeland. The process of collecting the objects helped link isolated Tamil individuals and families from various parts of Vancouver.

CTC Helps Educate Mainstream Communities About Tamil Culture and History

January 28th, 2010 – *Scarborough Civic Centre*



More than 100 frontline workers from the social sector gathered together for a unique daylong conference aimed at better understanding and helping Tamil families across the GTA. The workshop was among the first of its kind to help the social sector better target the diverse needs of the 300,000-strong Tamil Canadian community.

Held during Tamil Heritage month, the event aimed to celebrate the history of Tamil Canadians and our contribution to the social, cultural, political and economic strength of Canada. Tamil Heritage month is also meant to educate Canadians of all backgrounds about the language, traditions and history of the Tamils and to highlight the achievements of Tamils in various fields both in the past and the present.

The event was co-sponsored by CTC, Scarborough Addiction Services Partnership, YouthLink and CanTYD.

Tamil Canadians Protest Sri Lankan Independence Day

February 4, 2010 – *Sri Lankan Consulate & Canada wide*



Hundreds of Tamil Canadians gathered in front of the Sri Lankan consulate in Toronto to kick off a week of protests to mark February 4, 2010, the 62nd anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence. While this day was marked by celebrations in Sri Lanka, the day represents a time of mourning for Tamils in Canada and worldwide. February 4, 1948 marks the start of decades of persecution, oppression and discriminatory policies, which would lead to the civil war. Arbitrary arrests, riots targeting homes and businesses, disappearances, torture in jail, and state violence became part of the reality of being a Tamil in Sri Lanka. Protestors chanted and carried placards with several slogans including: "62 years of oppression" and "Sri Lanka = Island of Torture."

Organized by CTC, the rally was the first of many protests to take place across Canada. Other protests took place in a variety of cities including Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

No To Sri Lanka Campaign Holds Multiple Protests in Toronto and Montreal

February 6th, 2010 – *Toronto & Montreal*



Protesting in two of Canada's largest cities, Tamil Canadians gathered in Toronto and Montreal to urge consumers to boycott Sri Lankan made goods and travel to the island. Protesters stood in front of GAP outlets known for carrying Sri Lankan made products and informed Canadians about Sri Lanka's crimes against humanity. Organized by the CTC, the protests were part of a Tamil Awareness Campaign, which was launched on Sri Lanka's independence day to raise awareness about human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

CTC Edmonton Hosts First Banquet and Welcomes Hundreds

February 20th, 2010 – *Rasoi Banquet Hall, Edmonton, Alberta*

CTC Edmonton hosted its first ever banquet, drawing hundreds of Tamils from within the Edmonton community. The Rasoi Banquet Hall was packed to capacity as participants took in an evening of music, food and cultural performances that showcased the richness of Tamil traditions.



Ms. Rachel Notley, MLA for Edmonton Strathcona, Mr. Naresh Bhardwaj, Progressive Conservative MLA for Edmonton Elleslie, Mr. Hugh MacDonald, Liberal MLA for Edmonton Goldbar and Mr. Lewis Cardinal, Federal Candidate were all in attendance and were pleased with the event.

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CERTIFIED GENERAL ACCOUNTANT

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Fax: 416-613-2739
Email: nimal@nlraccounting.com
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CTC Launches "Connecting Families" Project

March 17th, 2010 – *Scarborough Civil Centre*

CTC launched its Connecting Families project in response to the thousands of families in the Northeast who needed help rebuilding their lives in the wake of the devastating war in Sri Lanka. In a rotunda packed with community members, leaders and journalists, CTC urged Tamil Canadians to open their hearts and help these families in need.

Tamil Canadians Organize Panel on Proposed Refugee Reforms

April 8, 2010 – *Munk Centre, University of Toronto*



Refugee experts gathered for a panel discussion entitled Refugee Reform: Implications for Refugees & Asylum Seekers. Organized by the CTC and the University of Toronto's Centre for South Asian Studies, the discussion explored the widespread implications of Bill C-11. The room was packed with academics, students, media and community members. Speakers included: Sri-Guggan Sri Skanda Rajah, a former Member of the Convention Refugee Determination Division of the IRB and former Vice-Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal; Sharry Aiken, an associate professor of law with Queen's University; and Raoul Boulakia, an immigration and refugee lawyer. The event was moderated by Francisco Rico-Martinez, co-director of FCJ Refugee Centre and part-time professor at Seneca College.

Tamil Canadians Launch Campaign Against Cancer

April 20th, 2010 – *Scarborough Civic Centre*

Tamil Canadians kicked off their fight against cancer by initiating a conversation on cancer within the community. The initiative, with all proceeds going to the Canadian Cancer Society, aspired to raise awareness about the disease. Ontario Minister of Citizenship Dr. Eric Hoskins attended the launch as a guest of honour and delivered a speech. Special guest Bharathi Arts president Seenivasagam Mathivasan, having recently lost his wife to cancer, delivered a very moving speech. Canadian Cancer Society Senior Manager of Special Events Sherry Lamb attended the launch and delivered a speech as well.

Tamil Studies Conference Fundraiser - Garden Party

May 9th, 2010 – *Scarborough, Ontario*

CTC was a proud co-sponsor of Tamil Studies Conference 2010. As a means of supporting Tamil culture, language and education, CTC co-organized an 'appam' garden fundraiser to raise funds for the Tamil Studies Conference. This event brought together academics, students, volunteers and interested participants to mix and mingle.

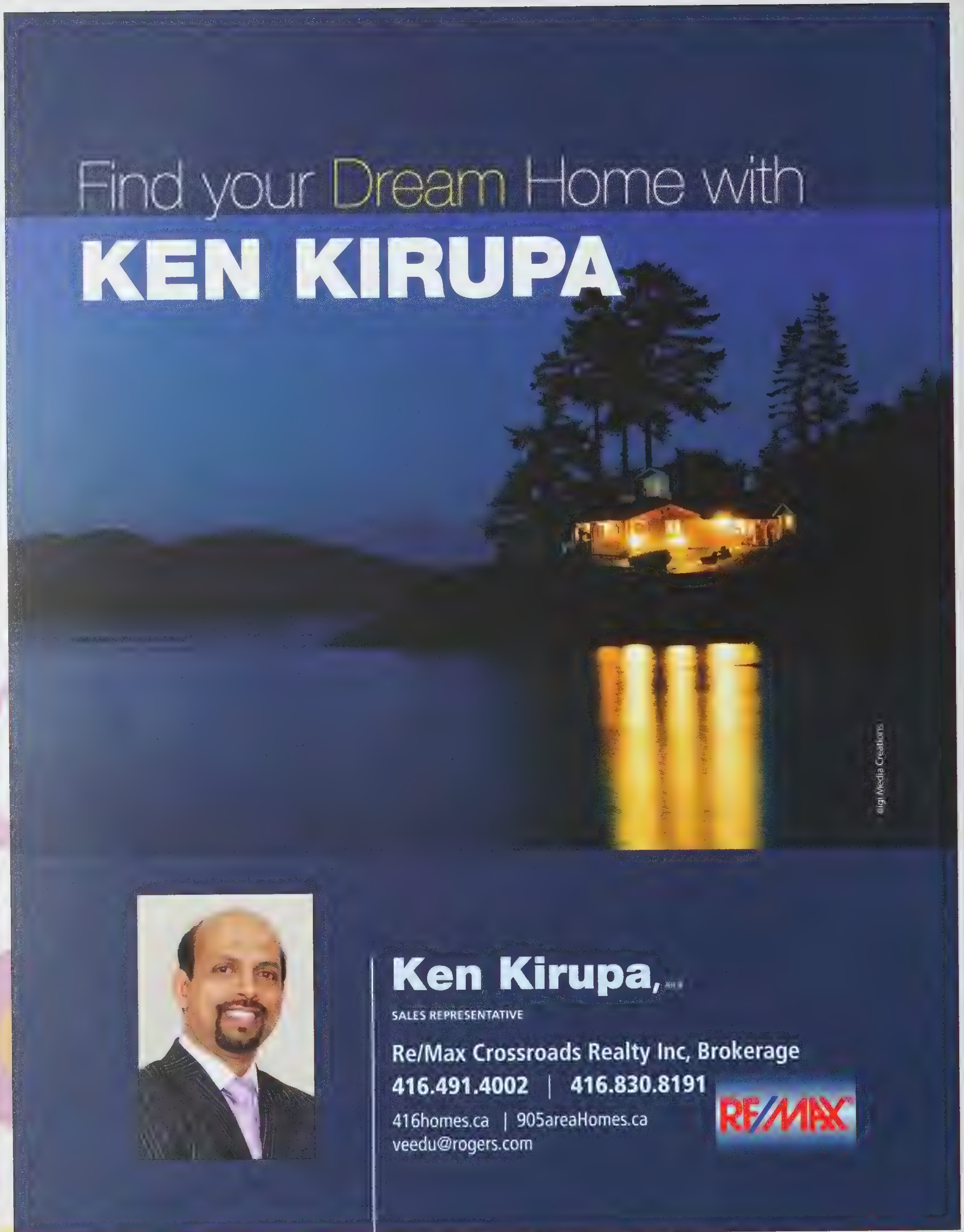
Parliamentarians Remember Lives Lost

May 11-19, 2010 – *Canadian Parliament, Ottawa*



Several Members of Parliament from all parties attended a multi-faith service, "Vanished Voices," inside the Canadian Parliament to remember the tens of thousands of lives lost in Sri Lanka's war. Organized by the CTC, the service was held to mark the immense bloodshed that occurred in the last stages of the war and featured prayer services by priests of all faiths. NDP Leader Jack Layton, Liberal




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Foreign Affairs Critic Bob Rae, Barrie MP Patrick Brown (Conservative), Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher MP Jean Dorion (Bloc Quebecois) delivered remarks at the event.



CTC also coordinated a red ribbon campaign throughout Canada. The ribbons symbolized the bloodshed of lives lost. CTC also called for prayers to be held at homes and religious institutions across the country.

Tamil Canadians Help Launch Taste of Asia

June 26-27, 2010 - *Markham*



The Taste of Asia Festival is one of the largest street festivals held in North America and in 2010, the organizers, the Federation of Chinese Canadians of Markham, the Town of Markham and the Association of Progressive Muslims of Ontario invited the CTC to co-chair the event acknowledging the significance of the Tamil community in Markham. It was founded in 2002 after the SARS period to boost local economic activity and foster deeper connections between various communities. The festival included non-stop entertainment, multicultural food, concerts by Asian stars, a kids zone, a pet show, a street basketball tournament, a car show, over 150 vendor booths and many other events. The festival featured booths representing Tamil entrepreneurs as well as community organizations.

Tamil Canadian Community Marches in Canada Day Parade

July 1st, 2010 - *Milner Park, Markham*



Tamil Canadians celebrated Canada Day in style with hundreds of Canadians from across the GTA. Waving Canadian flags, community members marched in the York Region parade. CTC helped educate parade-goers about the various types of Tamil dance, including Karakaattam and Kuthuraiaattam.

CTC joins FeTNA and Sends a Delegation to the 23rd Annual Conference

July 2-4th, 2010 – *Connecticut, USA*

In an ongoing effort to strengthen the ties with Tamils from South India and other parts of the world, CTC became a member of the Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA) in early 2010. FeTNA is a non-profit, literary, educational, cultural, charitable, secular and non-partisan organization bringing together over 40 prominent Tamil organizations across North America.

Many CTC members including 5 delegates attended the conference, which was packed with programs and break away sessions with a focus on promoting the Tamil language, identity and culture. Highlights of the conference included speeches by prominent figures from Tamil Nadu such as Poet Thamarai, Film Director Bharadhirajah, and performances by popular artists exposing talents from Tamil Nadu, Canada and the USA.


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Tamil Canadian Community Shows It's Pride

July 3-4th, 2010 – *Toronto, Ontario*

CTC celebrated Canada's diversity by marching for the first time in Toronto's Pride Parade. Held in downtown Toronto, the event drew tens of thousands of residents from all across Canada. In show of its support, CTC's performing arts team strived to showcase Tamil culture through a dance performance.

Tamil Canadians Remember Black July

July 23rd, 2010 – *Scarborough Civic Centre & Montreal*



Hundreds of Tamil Canadians joined CTC in commemorating the 27th anniversary of Black July, a dark period in the history of Tamils. Black July refers to the July 1983 riots in which Sri Lankan anti-Tamil pogroms claimed thousands of lives, as mobs, with voting lists and weapons in hand, identified, disgraced and killed Tamils while state authorities stood by.



Several families, youth, and affected survivors attended the event, which included a documentary directed by three aspiring young Toronto directors who gracefully captured the wounds and memories of six Tamil Canadians, a play from the Asylum Theatre group illustrating the parallels between the haunting survivor experiences of Black July to recent events in Sri Lanka, and archived photographs and articles on Black July. Several young members of the community contributed to the event with heartfelt poetry, graceful dancing and creative storytelling.



CTC Partners with York Regional Police to Increase Awareness

August 2010



With the help of Markham Tamil Organization, CTC joined forces with the York Regional Police and organized a York Region Police Citizen's Academy for the Tamil Canadian residents of Markham. The York Regional Police Citizen's Academy is an interactive program designed to provide residents with insight and a good working knowledge of the police service and how they function.

Seminars offered included the History of York Regional Police, a day in the life of a Police Officer, the Police Services Board, robbery prevention, guns and gangs, recruiting and the roles of the drugs and vice, Canine and Marine Units as well as the Diversity and Cultural Resources Bureau.

CTC Assists Newcomers Onboard the MV Sun Sea

August 13th, 2010 – *Vancouver, British Columbia*

The MV Sun Sea arrived off the shores of Victoria, British Columbia during the early hours of August 13th, 2010, carrying approximately 492 men, women and children of Tamil origin.

The Canadian Tamil Congress worked around the clock to help these newcomers. Over the days and weeks following the arrival, the Canadian Tamil Congress worked around the clock and continued to play an active role in ensuring that the rights of the newcomers were protected. In addition to sending a team to Vancouver to support and complement the local CTC chapter, CTC provided immediate and short term assistance which included the distribution of legal and medical materials translated in Tamil, the provision of monetary support for the immediate needs of newcomers,

connecting newcomers with family members, connecting unaccompanied minors to community resources, referring newcomers to lawyers and other professionals and by monitoring the situation to ensure that legal rights were respected with an emphasis placed on the rights of young people.

Tamil Canadians Walk for Cancer Awareness; Raises $35,000

September 19th, 2010 – *Thomson Memorial Park*



Hundreds gathered for the "Tamil Canadian Walk for Cancer Awareness". About $35,000 was raised for the Canadian Cancer Society. Organized by the Canadian Tamil Congress, the 5 km-walk drew everyone from students to families to senior citizens. Several community organizations and businesses participated in the event, which featured a 5-km walk, games and a BBQ.



NDP Leader Jack Layton who bravely fought cancer, Don Valley West MP Rob Oliphant, Ontario Minister of Energy Brad Duguid, Mayoral Candidate George Smitherman and Toronto Police Staff Superintendent Mike Federico delivered speeches at the walk. The congratulatory messages from Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and Federal Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff was read at the event. The Toronto Police Service joined the campaign as partners and lent its full support with officers from Divisions 41 and 43.



Guy Laporte, Director of Toronto Revenue Development for the Canadian Cancer Society, and Sherry Lamb, Senior Manager of Special Events for the Canadian Cancer Society, also delivered remarks at the event.

Canadian Blood Services Honours CTC

September 20th, 2010 – *Ottawa*



The Canadian Blood Services (CBS) honoured CTC as the top Community Partner for Central Ontario at the national event "Honouring Our Lifeblood" in Ottawa. CTC, the coordinating body for Tamil Canadian blood donors, accepted the award in recognition of Tamil Canadians' outstanding contributions to the Canada's blood system. CTC was singled out for becoming the largest community blood donation group across Canada. CTC partnered with the Canadian Blood Services in 2008 through its Partners for Life program.

CTC's Edmonton Chapter Promotes Tamil Language and Culture

October 31st, 2010 – *Edmonton, Alberta*



CTC's Edmonton chapter proudly presented "Thamilmurasam", a cultural event organized to promote the Tamil language and culture and by showcasing the local talents, including a Tamil historical drama entitled 'Pandaravannian', 'Villuppaddu' and 'Kaviyarangam'.

CTC's Montreal Organizes Another Successful Blood Drive for Héma Québec

November 13th, 2010 – *Thiru Murugan Temple, Montreal*



CTC's Montreal chapter organized the annual blood drive with Héma Québec which gathered more than 45 donors and helped save over 134 lives. A tremendous support was shown from volunteers and many students from various Cégeps and Universities across Québec who came to show their support.

CTC celebrates Holidays in the Village with York Regional Police

December 4th, 2010 – *Whitchurch-Stouffville*

In its ongoing effort to increase the understanding and to enhance the working relationship with other ethno-cultural groups, CTC participated in the "Holidays in the Village" organized by the York Regional Police. The event attracts residents from all over York Region and showcases the diverse cultures and faiths that exist within the Region and how they celebrate the holiday season. CTC's interactive booth included details on Tamil language, culture and identity and how the holiday season is celebrated in the community. The booth was bustling, with children and adults dropping into learn more about Tamils and also to have their names written in one of the most ancient and classical languages in the world.




Cancer will attack over 173,000 of us this year. It does not discriminate. It has taken our brothers and sisters, our mothers and fathers, our children and our friends. Cancer is relentless. But so are we. We are the Canadian Cancer Society and we are fighting back. We have more impact against more cancers in more communities than any other cancer charity in Canada, yet there is still so much more we need to do. Cancer threatens us all. But we reject cancer's attempts to strike the lives of so many Canadians. That's why we promise to do everything we can to prevent cancer. We promise to save lives. And we promise to empower, inform and support those living with this disease. We fight back by funding clinical trials and research into better treatments and cures. We educate and advocate. And we encourage Canadians to volunteer and donate. To some, the daffodil is just a flower. To us, it is a symbol of strength and courage, a symbol of life. It says we will not give up. It says we will fight back. It says we will beat cancer.
Are you ready to join the fight?
Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne du cancer
fightback.ca

Canadian Tamil Congress Walks to Fight Cancer

By Dr. Priya Jeganathan

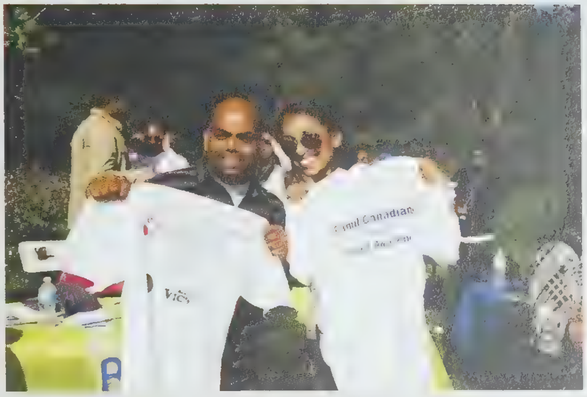
The Canadian Tamil Congress is proud to celebrate another successful walkathon campaign. This year we chose the Canadian Cancer Society because of its work in enhancing the quality of life for Canadians from coast to coast. The Canadian Cancer Society is not only funding research on all types of cancer, but also provides the public with comprehensive information about cancer and risk reduction, and advocates for healthy public policy. Their mission is to create a world where no Canadian fears cancer and we, as Tamil Canadians, want to join them in this fight.

Unfortunately cancer has left few untouched. Many of us know someone who has been affected by cancer, whether it is a passing acquaintance, friend or family member. With us, we have children who have lost their parents and spouses who have lost their partners. We also have among us brave survivors and their families, who continue to inspire us and give us hope that cancer can be beaten.

They are the faces that tell the story of cancer, a



disease that has no boundaries when it comes to ethnicity, gender or age. Based on current incidence rates, 40% of Canadian women and 45% of men will develop cancer during their lifetime. The road ahead is undoubtedly a difficult one requiring active funding, research and raising awareness in all communities across Canada.



The CTC launched the 'Walk to Save the Ones We Love' campaign in April 2010. As part of this campaign, CTC organized a number of informational sessions throughout the year with speakers from the Canadian Cancer Society, educating people about cancer prevention, healthy lifestyles, different types of cancer and the importance of regular screening. CTC also partnered with the prestigious Bavadharanin Bharradhi Arts whose students worked hard to showcase a fabulous musical concert raising funds in honour of their founder, the late Mrs.Bhavadharani Mathivasan.

With the support of various community groups and the Toronto Police Services, in particular Staff Superintendent Mike Federico and Constable Johnny Bobbilli from the Community Mobilization Unit, Divisions 41 and 43, the campaign culminated with a successful walkathon on September 20^{th}, 2010. Participants enjoyed a sunny day with BBQ, activity booths, sack races and fun filled activities for the entire family.

With the incredible support from the community and numerous volunteers, the Canadian Tamil Congress is proud to announce that we have raised over $35,000.00 in funds towards the Canadian Cancer Society.

Thank you all.

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Te: 415 335 1553



Disillusion

By Dela Muhundarajah

In my home in Toronto
I looked out my window
and saw darkness in daylight

Clothed, fed and surrounded by life
yet I lived lifeless
I could not speak without tears
or remain still after seeing images and reading articles
about a war torn land and the people
naked, hungry and surrounded by death

What began as a fight for equal rights
for the freedom to be who they were
became a desperate plea
for another second to breathe

I fidgeted to grasp a solution
and bit my quivering lips
attempted to push down my emotions
as I witnessed a staggering number of deaths

I was powerless
my voice and my hand linked with others
grabbed some attention, stirred some interest
but my message was not getting through
to those who could make a difference
so I worked harder and spent my hours
sending e-mails to local and world leaders,
but money is concomitant to power

A physical war may be over
but still I struggle to find a peace of mind,
and answers to the atrocities committed

I give back to the believers lost
by learning about my roots,
speaking my language, practicing my culture,
and by remembering the cause

I look out my window and I see stars
unmovable, unchangeable, beautiful and bright
they remind me of the importance
of never losing sight,
no matter how hopeless and difficult the fight,
of what you believe in
and who you are.

Fifth Annual Tamil Studies Conference

By Manjula Selvarajah

In May 2010, the Canadian Tamil Congress held an outdoor fundraiser for the 2010 University of Toronto Tamil Studies Conference bringing together over 75 well-wishers and donors for hot steaming hoppers in a beautiful backyard garden in Scarborough, Ontario. Through the afternoon, attendees were addressed by Prof. Cheran, Prof. Srilata Raman and Rajan Philips; listened to Devi Arasanayagam, daughter of Jean Arasanayagam, reading a poem by her mother; and entertained by Mithila, a local musician and songwriter. Donations, ticket sales and a popular raffle brought in over $10,000 for the conference.



The Tamil Studies Conference is the largest of its kind in North America with over 70 Tamil Studies scholars, artists, writers and activists from around the world covering Tamil language, literature, the arts and more. The fifth annual Tamil Studies Conference was held at the Munk Centre, University of Toronto in May 2010 jointly hosted by the University of Toronto's Centre for South Asian Studies and the University of Windsor. Academics, artists, students and activists presented papers on the central theme of the conference: "Constructing Tamil Worlds: Circulation, Marginality and Plurality" and held thought-provoking discussions from a talk on the "New Horizons in Tamil Diasporic Literature" to a roundtable on "Representing Protest".

Our members who attended the conference spoke



glowingly of rich discussions during post-panel question periods, of connections formed with other attendees in hallways over coffee and the opportunity to listen to academics speak about their work and findings on the Tamil Diaspora. Our membership has repeatedly expressed a desire to see the Canadian Tamil Congress continue raising funds for the Tamil Studies Conference for years to come, a commitment we are happy to keep.

We encourage everyone to consider donating to the



sixth annual Tamil Studies Conference on "Parimaanam: Images, Embodiments Contestations" to be held from May 13-14, 2011. More information about attending, presenting at or donating to the conference can be found at **www.tamilstudiesconference.ca**.

Giving The Gift of Life: Tamil Canadian Blood Donation and Stem Cell Campaign

By Dr. Meera Selvakone

Jon Brent was just 3 years-old when he was diagnosed with leukemia in 1995. He desperately needed regular blood transfusions for his treatment and an eventual bone marrow transplant. Without help from his fellow Canadians who rolled up their sleeves to donate blood, Jon Brent would not be alive today.

It was Jon Brent and other Canadians in need like him that prompted the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) to partner with the Canadian Blood Services in 2008 through its Partners for Life program. The group wanted to choose a charity that would enable its members to give back to their communities across Canada. To date, Tamil Canadians have brought in close to 1000 units of blood and have saved 3,000 lives. In 2009, the CTC launched a year-long blood and stem cell awareness campaign and subsequently surpassed its original pledge of 50 registrants for the OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network.



"Canada gave me the gift of life when I came here. I lost everything. I left my country of birth in search of a life without fear and persecution. Today I want to give back", said Umesh Vallipuram, a Tamil Canadian blood donor and survivor of Black July 1983. The Canadian Blood Services honoured the CTC as the top Community Partner for Central Ontario at the national event "Honouring Our Lifeblood" in Ottawa on September 20, 2010. The award recognizes Tamil Canadians' outstanding contributions to Canada's blood system. Only one community partner from each of the seven regions in Canada was honoured at the event and the CTC was singled out for becoming the largest community blood donation group across Canada.

The awards ceremony took place at the renowned Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa. Mr. Stu Schwartz, an Ottawa radio personality and announcer for the Ottawa Senators Hockey Club, opened the event as the Master of Ceremonies. Dr. Graham Sher, Chief Executive Officer Chair of the Canadian Blood Services, gave a speech welcoming all honourees, guests and members of the Canadian Blood Services. Dr. Marla Shapiro, medical consultant for the CTV National News and Canada AM, was the keynote speaker and talked about her experience fighting breast cancer.

Several recipients of blood products spoke about how grateful they were to have received blood donations and how their lives were saved as a result. Jon Brent, now an 18 year-old student, talked about his experience waiting for a bone marrow transplant after being diagnosed with leukemia as a child. His eloquent retelling of his story drove home the message to all present about the very real need for blood and stem cell donations.

Through public discussion and an ongoing awareness campaign, the Canadian Tamil Congress hopes to encourage even more Tamil Canadians to roll up their sleeves and donate. Recognizing that there is a strong demand for South Asian donors, the CTC plans to expand its partnership across the country to build an even greater profile for the One Match network.

To join the Tamil Canadian Blood Donation and Stem Cell Campaign and make an appointment to donate, please call the CTC at (416)240-0078 or the Canadian Blood Services at 1-888-2-DONATE and use the **Tamil Canadian Partner ID: CANA009345.**

Imagining Integration

By Dilani Mohan

In his notes for a speech regarding immigration, Sir Wilfred Laurier wrote: "Nor should we allow too many Asiatic to enter." Comments such as this are easily found in the past and illustrate the deliberateness behind colonial construction of Canada as a white European-settler nation. Yet the consequences of imagining Canada in such a way reveal that, when the impact of a historic policy prioritizing white settler interests is not questioned or considered, Canada is continuously reconstructed in this racially homogenous image. Consequently this rebuilding is able to take place both unconsciously and repetitively. The elimination of funding to mainly Toronto-based immigrant agencies serving distinct ethnic communities and genders is a current example of this reconstruction that should draw the concern of CTC members. This is not to say necessarily that decision makers are racist, but rather that the decision-making method incorporates without question the results of a racist nation-building process.

Consider Benedict Anderson's explanation of nations as 'imagined communities' requiring shared experiences and a sense of belonging to a larger community. If building a nation is an exercise in imagination, so too is it an exercise in carving space literally and figuratively for those who are granted access to the resources and benefits associated with citizenship. What happens then, when the ability to imagine oneself in a community is denied, or when spaces which facilitate such imagination are removed? Immigrant agencies essentially serve this function and provide the space within which new immigrants are assisted in resettlement, thereby making it possible for them to imagine their space and place within Canada. The loss of funding tragically means demise for many of these agencies. In more material terms, with the removal of these spaces new immigrants are denied access to sites which assist them in joining the Canadian 'imagined community' through language classes, job-finding and other integration programs. These services and programs can be especially vital to newly-arrived women, and their closure means adding to the marginalization of an already vulnerable group. With many of the organizations serving distinct communities, the consequence is twofold: the participation of racialized persons in the imagination of Canada is impeded, and the perception Canada's racial homogeneity is preserved. In other words, the core of the imagined Canadian community remains white with the corollary that the interests important to those communities are prioritized above others. The interests and needs of racialized and immigrant communities, on the other hand are left as before on the periphery.

Certainly there are times when budget cuts are necessary, but the concern here is in which programs are likely to become budgetary casualties. It ought to disquiet Tamil-Canadians that the interests of new immigrants are relegated to the margins—the very spaces most often rendered vulnerable to the violence of elimination in both aforementioned imagined and physical space. We cannot afford to condone or support the silencing, however unintentional it may be, of services aiding new immigrants without questioning those programs that survive. There is nothing to be gained through complicity in our own exclusion.

---

[1]Sir Wilfred Laurier (notes for an immigration speech) NAC, Laurier Papers, Do 217894 cited in Chantal Tie, *Immigration and Refugee Law Lecture Slides*, (Faculty of
[2]Law: University of Ottawa, September 11, 2008)
[3]Nicholas Keung, "Funding axed for Toronto immigrant agencies". Toronto Star, December 23, 2010.
Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) at 353. [4]*Supra* note 2. [5]*Ibid.*

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Is Spirituality on the Rise Among Tamil Youth?

By Amarnath Amarasingam

"Put your hands together and ask God to help you study next year," my mother used to tell me during our regular New Year's Eve visits to the temple. Many of us remember the Hindu rituals, the temples, and the home shrines that were an ever-present part of our childhood. We remember circumambulating the shrines, placing the holy ash on our foreheads, and praying for the removal of all obstacles. Some research suggests, however, that the next generation of Tamil youth in Canada is finding less significance in traditional ritualistic religion.

While it seems odd to point this out during the harvest festival of Thai Pongal, evidence suggests that Tamil youth are increasingly turning to a more generic spirituality. While they may still consider themselves Hindu (or Christian), the ways in which they practice their Hinduism is colored by very modern, Western, as well as globalizing tendencies.

For one, there is a widespread perception that religion is fundamentally divisive. As the majority of Hindu Tamil youth identify more strongly with their ethnic identity than their religious identity, many believe that adhering too closely to a particular religion is only dividing the Tamil community even further.

Secondly, the process of globalization has, in the words of sociologist Roland Robertson, led to the "intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole." Even while they maintain strong national and individual identities, there is an increasing commitment to the concept of "humankind," which is seamlessly undergirded by a belief in the oneness or interconnectedness of all people.

For many who consider themselves "spiritual but not religious," spirituality has little to do with how it is commonly understood: spiritually desperate seekers creating a hodge-podge worldview characterized by an evanescent commitment to meditation, yoga, New Age beliefs, Buddhist philosophy, and private contemplation. Rather, spirituality is indeed a social ethic consisting of a commitment to social justice, a oneness with nature, volunteerism, involvement in civic associations, and a safeguarding of human rights.

While many of these aspects of spirituality may exist in Hinduism, the religious leadership in Canada has not been doing a commendable job in highlighting them. Instead, the perception remains among Tamil youth that Hinduism is primarily concerned with ritual and, as such, is void of the resources needed for them to be a socially involved and social justice oriented individual in today's complex geopolitical landscape.

Amarnath Amarasingam *is a doctoral candidate in the Laurier-Waterloo PhD in Religious Studies, and holds a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship. He is currently writing his dissertation entitled,* Pain, Pride, and Politics: Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism in Canada.

The MV Sun Sea: Challenges, Inspiration and a Newfound Family

By Sarujan Kanapathipillai

The date for the retreat was established; August 13th to August 15th was set aside for CTC members and their families to get to know one another. As a fairly new member of CTC, I looked forward to forming new relationships with both the veterans and the newcomers of the organization. With less than a week away from the retreat, we were informed that a ship with a few hundred Tamil asylum seekers may be heading to Canada.

The boat arrived during the early hours of Friday August 13th, 2010. The next few days provided many of us with a rewarding experience that we will never forget. We worked on an issue that we are passionate about and for people that we care deeply for. I was a new addition to a highly competent and dedicated team who worked together as limbs of the same body towards the same goal. Working alongside such supportive, caring, dedicated people was truly inspiring and made me realize the joy one gets when the heart and mind are in sync.



We were prepared to be bombarded by the media and anticipated the worst as the articles and public comments that came prior to the arrival of the boat were not very welcoming. However, the media came to us with open eyes, ears and hearts; they listened to what we had to say without prejudgement and conducted investigative journalism on the conditions the asylum seekers were fleeing from. While some politicians used aggressive rhetoric, many others stood their ground to reaffirm our Canadian identity and to uphold our tradition of exercising compassion. Most inspiringly, the kind-hearted native people in Esquimalt prayed for the wellbeing of the newcomers. If anyone ever wonders about the roots of Canadian compassion, look no further than to our natives who planted it into our soil. When we felt overwhelmed and weak, we found strength in the tear-jerking stories of the newcomers – the toddler with shrapnel lodged in his head, the desperate mother who had to put her children through a dangerous three month journey, the elderly woman who suffered greatly, and the father who died at sea leaving behind a wife and five year old son in Sri Lanka.

In hindsight, a retreat would have been a relaxing and fun way to spend our time, but the unexpected events of that weekend did not just help build a team, it helped build a family. Nothing could have drew us together or made us appreciate one another the way the events of that weekend enabled us to. As one member emotionally informed us from Victoria about his first encounter with the newcomers:

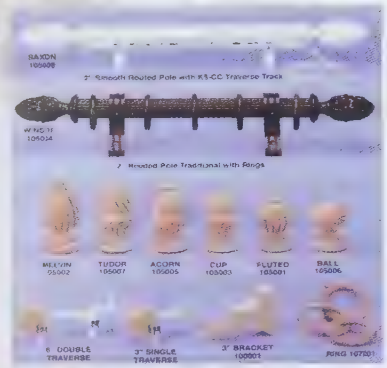
> "We sat around in this large gym. We laughed and cried. These are today's refugees, but Canada's future. Their determination and strength will make this country stronger."

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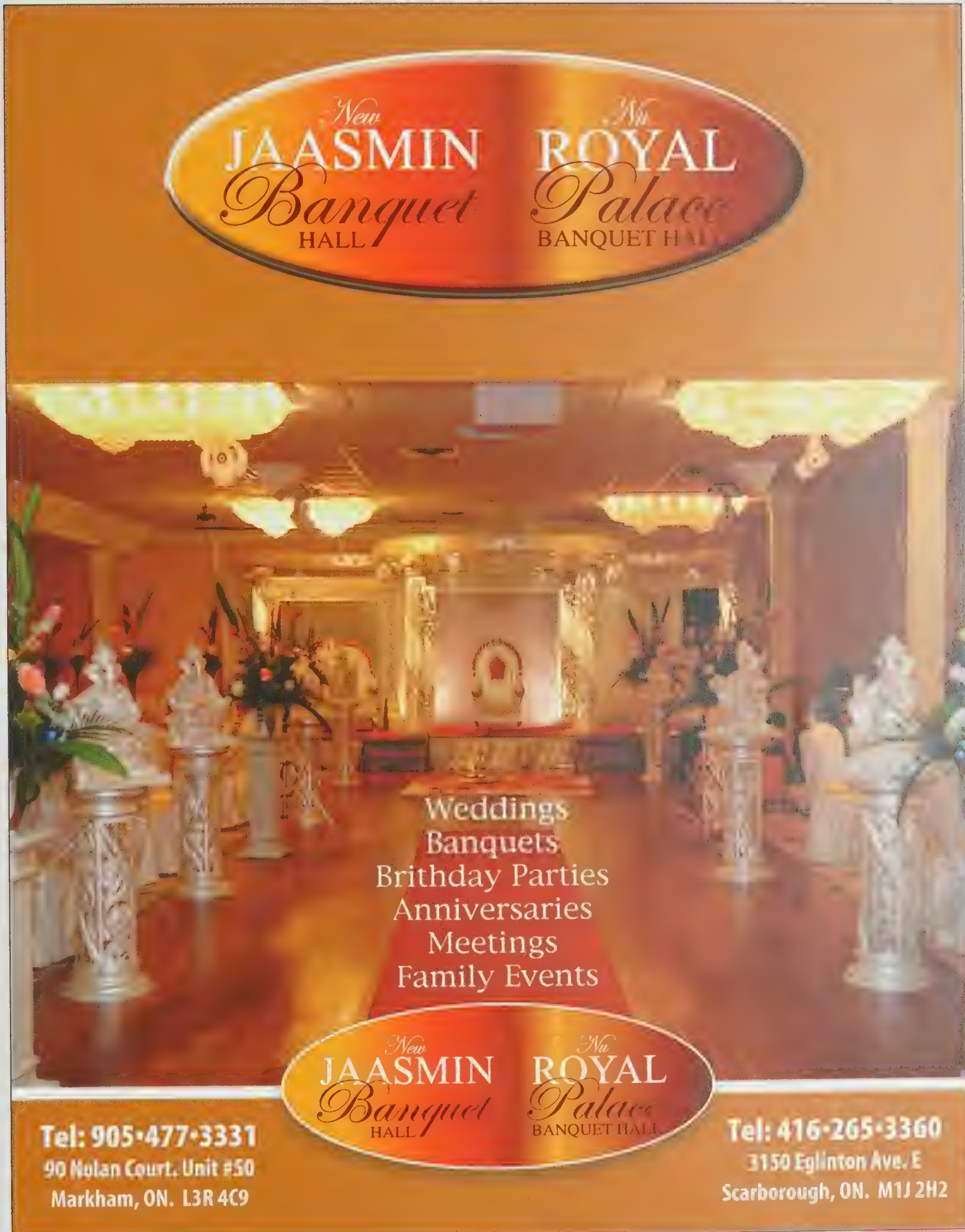
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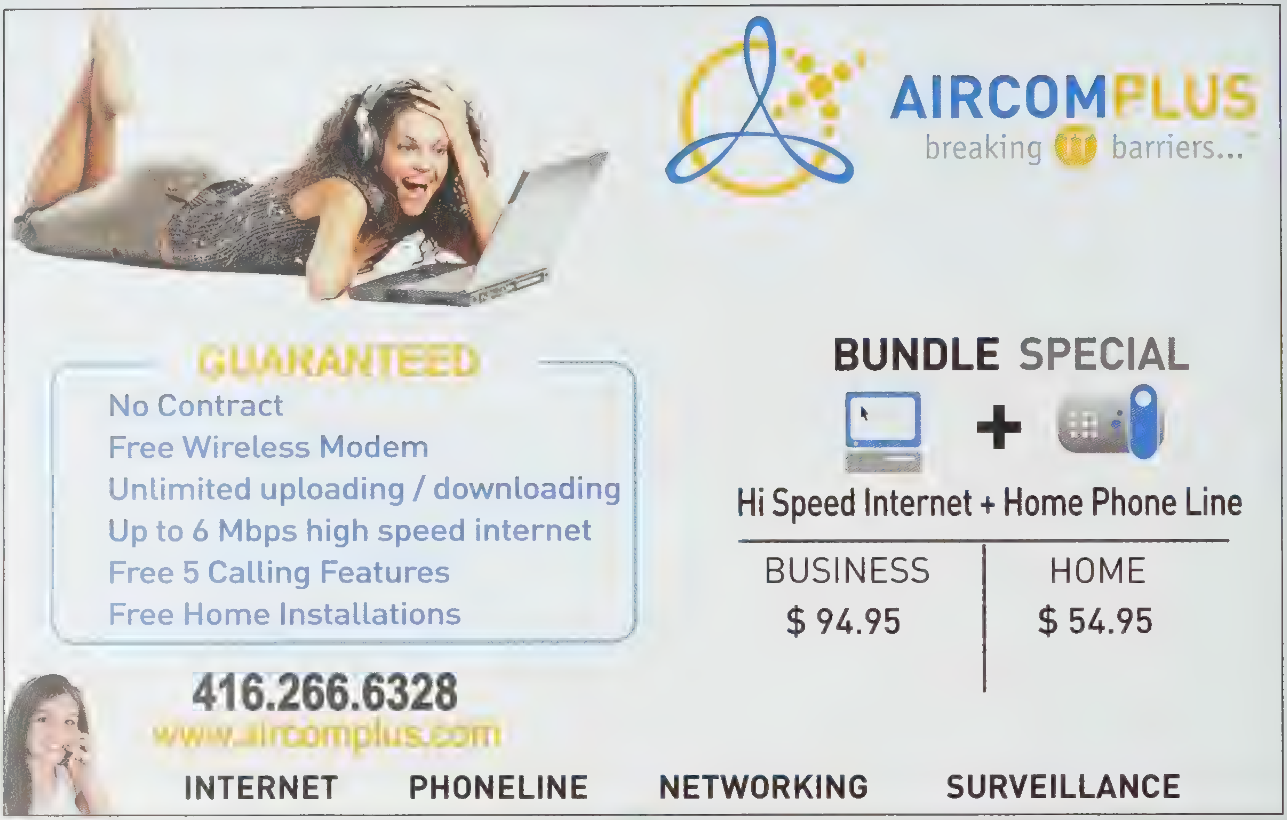
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Aritist Profiles

Vaitheki Tharmaratnam :: *Pianist*

Vaitheki has a diverse academic background and works for Accenture (Global Management Consulting Firm) as a Technology Consulting Analyst. To keep a balance in my life, Vaitheki part takes in various extra-curricular activities including spending a significant amount of time volunteering with the Muscular Dystrophy of Canada. She also has successfully passed the Grade 10 Royal Conservatory of Music piano practical examination. Vaitheki is a pianist and singer for a local Performing Arts Group performing for events throughout the year.

Umananthini Rajendram :: *Singer*

Umananthini started learning vocal classical music from her uncle Pon Sundarlingam at the age of 6. At a tender age of fourteen, the child prodigy in Umananthini made her way to the Konesh Ochestra band in Canada. With her melodious voice and performing in a number of local and international stages, Umananthini has built a formidable reputation as a singer among the Canadian Tamils. During her tenure, numerous recognitions have come her way including the title Canadian Mathura Kural hosted by Abdul Hameed. Umananthini recently released her music album " enn Ithayathin Oosai", which was written and composed by her. She completed her project with some of the conspicuously excellent artist in the Indian Music Industry such asS.P Balasubramaniam, Pushpavanam Kuppusamy, Haricharan.

Melanie Ratnam :: *Singer*

Melanie Ratnam has been singing and performing since the age of four. She enjoys singing popular music, but she is vocally trained in the classical music genre. She has performed at several venues in the GTA including Roy Thompson Hall and the Rogers Centre. She has also won national scholarships in recognition for her academic achievement. She is currently a third year PhD student at the University of Toronto doing doing research in the field of stroke and molecular biology.

Magisha Baheerathan :: *Singer*

Magisha Baheerathan is a rising vocal talent in the Tamil Canadian community and the winner of TVi Junior Superstar 2010 finals sponsored by 7S Group. With Shreya Gosal and Chinmaye being her role models, music has become part and parcel of this Grade 4 student . With her rhythmic voice and aspiring talent, she has become an inspiration for many young artists her age. There is no doubt that winning the Superstar final is just the beginning for this growing artist.

Students of Guru Nirothini Pararajasingam :: *Dance Performance*

Nirothini Pararajasingam, a performer, teacher and choreographer, had her initial training in Bharathanatyam from the well known Guru Balasundary Kanagasabai and later from Guru Vijayambihai Indrakumar. She concluded her studies under Guru Adyar K. Laksman in Tamil Nadu, India. She also obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in India. She started her teaching career in Sri Lanka and has been teaching for 20 years in Toronto. In 1990, Mrs. Pararajasingam started Niruthya Kalanjali, an institute of fine arts in Toronto. This institute is dedicated towards maintaining Indian culture and religion through the art of classical dance. Mrs. Pararajasingam teaches arts, dance and culture at the institute. Her dance troupe has put on many performances to raise funds for various organisations including the Canadian Cancer Society and the Hospital for Sick Children.

Leaders for Change Award

Leaders for Change award honours the unique contribution of an individual who through his or her exceptional vision, perseverance and commitment has redefined or strengthened the need for change in our society. The recipient of this award will be someone who has demonstrated an effort to strive for change in a way that has positively impacted the lives of others. This award recognizes a determined individual whose efforts are characterized by a dedication to leadership, a vision for change and a desire to enhance the lives of others.

Award Recipient

Armand LaBarge
Former York Regional Police Chief



Mr. Armand LaBarge retired as Chief of York Regional Police on December 12th, 2010 after serving 37 years in the York Regional Police Service. Throughout his career, Mr. LaBarge developed a reputation as a tireless volunteer who made valuable contributions to several charitable and community organizations locally and internationally.

Mr. LaBarge has served on behalf of organizations as Director of Community Services for the Vaughan Rotary Club; as an advisor with the Canadian International Peace Project; as a member of the Board of the Canadian Community Living Foundation; as Chair of St. John Ambulance – York Region Branch, Special Olympics Ontario and as a member of Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids' Sake. He is also active in countless other community initiatives that raise funds for causes such as the fight against HIV/AIDS and cancer.

Acknowledged for his outstanding commitment to promoting diversity and multiculturalism, Mr. LaBarge was and continues to be a well-respected figure in the police arena and among the countless communities he has worked with throughout his career.

After years of commitment, loyalty and supporting diverse communities, Mr. LaBarge has been recognized as an incredible police ambassador, a tireless worker and beloved mentor. Though he may have retired from policing, he has not retired from this community that he has become so passionate about.

Service Excellence Award

As part of our ongoing commitment to upholding values of multiculturalism, and promoting community involvement, the Canadian Tamil Congress will honour the contribution of an individual who has supported the Tamil people. The recipient of this award will be someone who has demonstrated compassion, dedication and support to community-building efforts. This award will recognize the individual's long-term support, commitment and significant contribution to the Tamil community in Canada.

Award Recipient

Barbara L. Jackman, Lawyer



Ms. Barbara L. Jackman is presently in private practice and specializes in the areas of immigration and refugee law. Throughout her legal career, Ms. Jackman has developed a reputation of being one of Canada's most effective advocates for immigration and refugee rights.

Ms. Jackman received her LL.B. from the University of Toronto in 1976 and was called to the Ontario Bar in 1978. As a member and leader of various associations, she has received a number of important awards including the Advocates' Society Award of Justice (2000); the Sikh Centennial Foundation's Award of Excellence (2002); the Law Society Medal (2003); the Tamil Women Organization Award (2005); and the Arab Community Centre of Toronto – Community Service Award (2005). For her dedication to public service and her untiring work as a mentor, lecturer, leader and member of numerous community organizations, Ms. Jackman was awarded an honourary Doctor of Law degree by the Law Society of Upper Canada in 2007.

Ms. Jackman has been an instructor in the Bar Admission Program, lecturer at the Faculties of Law at Queen's University, the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School. She has also been a lecturer for continuing education for the Law Society of Upper Canada and the Canadian Bar Association.

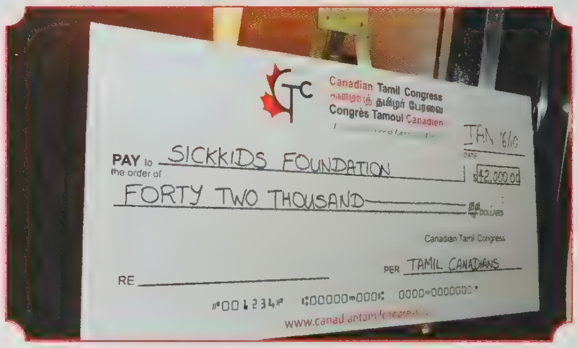
Ms. Jackman's work is proof of endless devotion to public service and significant dedication to her community. She has and continues to work tirelessly on groundbreaking cases to bring about changes in the law to protect the rights of immigrants and refugees.

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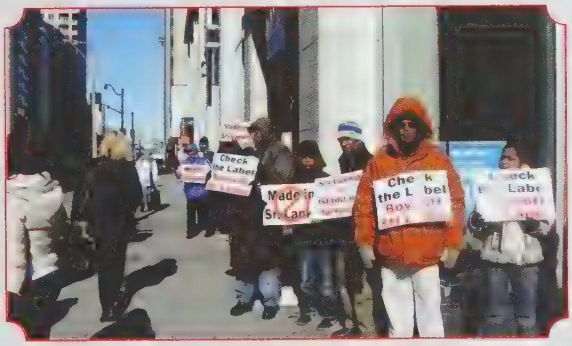


"There is nothing more glorious than to persist, in the advance of the Community." -Kural: 1021

Faces of CTC
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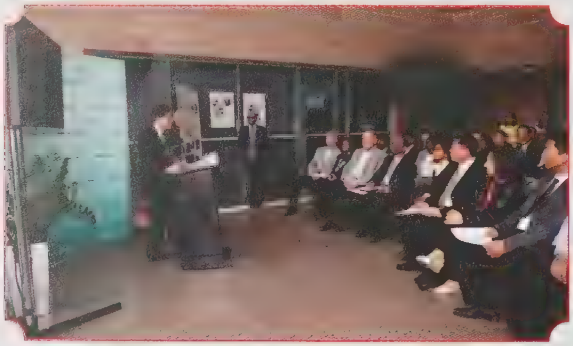
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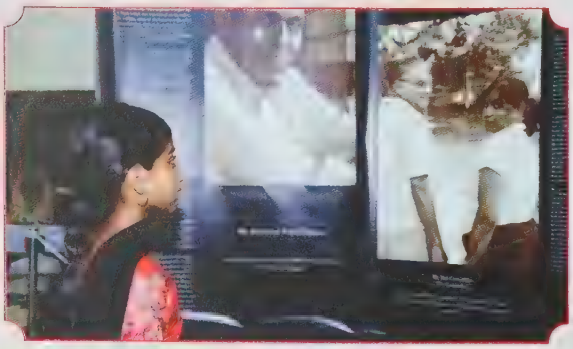














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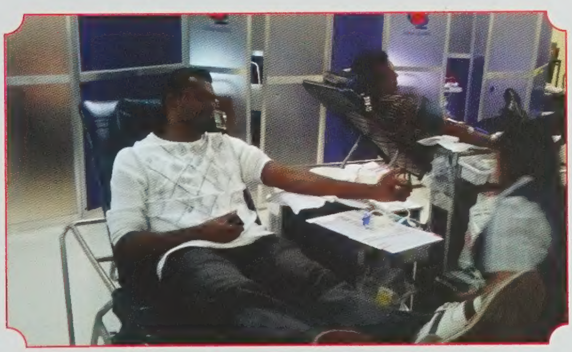




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*"There is nothing more glorious than to persist,
in the advance of the community."*

Kural: 1021